

CHRIST In The Psalms

by

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*All things must be fulfilled, which were written . . .
in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44)*

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The Sixteenth Psalm

The Joyous March of the Son of GOD toward the Cross of Calvary.

Psalms 16

1. **Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.**
2. **O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee;**
3. **But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.**
4. **Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.**
5. **The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.**
6. **The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.**
7. **I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.**
8. **I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**
9. **Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.**
10. **For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**
11. **Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**

The HOLY SPIRIT's title for the Sixteenth Psalm is "*Michtam of David*." The word "Michtam" is found in the superscription of five other Psalms in a group by themselves, the Fifty-sixth to the Sixtieth inclusive. Of this word "*The Companion Bible*" says:

"The word Michtam is from Katam, to cut in, or engrave, as in Jeremiah:

"For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God" (Jeremiah 2:22). The word "marked" in this verse comes from a word that means, "to engrave."

"The Septuagint renders it stelographic - a sculptured writing. Hence, stele - a sepulchral monument, on account of the inscription graven on it.

"The word, therefore, points to a graven and therefore a permanent writing; graven on account of its importance (compare Job 19:23-24)

"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!" (Job 19:23-24)

"What that importance is can be gathered only from the Michtam Psalms themselves.

"The Bible derives the word from Kethem, gold, either from its being precious, or hidden away.

"This meaning is not far out; but it lacks the raison d'etre for this importance, which the other derivation gives in connection with death and resurrection.

"The Michtam Psalms are all pervaded by the common characteristic of being personal, direct, and more or less private.

"The reference is to David's son and David's LORD; and especially to his death and resurrection: or to a deliverance from imminent danger, or death, or even from the grave itself. See Psalms 16:10-11; 56:13; 57:3; 58:10-11; 59:16; 60:5, 12).

"For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:10-11).

"For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?" (Psalm 56:13).

"He shall send from Heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. Selah. God shall send forth his mercy and his truth" (Psalm 57:3).

"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth" (Psalm 58:10-11).

"But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning: for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble." (Psalm 59:16).

"That thy beloved may be delivered; save with thy right hand, and hear me . . . Through

God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies" (Psalm 60:5, 12).

It is David who, '**being a prophet**' (Acts 2:25-31), knew that GOD would raise up JESUS to sit on His throne. Hence this is the truth engraven in the first of these Michtam Psalms (16)"

But the title also mentions David: It is a "*Michtam of David*." This also is significant, especially in connection with a Psalm so clearly Messianic. We shall see presently that the speaker in the Psalm is none other than the Messiah Himself. Therefore we may see also that the name of David in the title-line refers to David's Son, and David's LORD, as doubtless do all the Davidic Psalms.

The Messianic character of the Sixteenth Psalm has already been abundantly indicated, but now for the direct proof. Let the reader turn to the second chapter of the Book of the Acts. Peter is preaching his great sermon to the Jews gathered in Jerusalem, which resulted in the conversion of three thousand men and women. In verses 22-33 will be found the passage we seek.

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the Promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:22-33).

A second New Testament mark of identification of our Psalm as Messianic is found in Paul's sermon at Antioch of Pisidia, recorded in the 13th chapter of Acts. In verses 34-39 the apostle to the Gentiles says:

"And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. (Isaiah 55:3) Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, (Psalm 16) Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised

again, saw no corruption. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:34-39).

The speaker throughout the Psalm is CHRIST. Written a thousand years beforehand, the Psalm yet describes the meditations of the Holy One as He trod the path toward the Cross of Calvary.

"Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee" (Psalm 16:1-2).

The Son found full satisfaction in the FATHER. The language of Psalm 73:25 might well have originated in His heart: "Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

Then His thoughts turn toward His redeemed ones:

"But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight" (Psalm 16:3).

We cannot appreciate His love for us. **"Yea, he loveth the people; All his saints are in thy hand"** (Deuteronomy 33:3). **"When Israel was a child, then I loved him"** (Hosea 11:1). And we who were sometime Gentiles have been brought within the circle of His love. He is the One **"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance"** (Ephesians 1:11); and He longs for us to realize what is **"what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints"** (Ephesians 1:18). Let us therefore join in praise **"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"** (Revelation 1:5).

The Son's devotion to His FATHER is absolute. His dedication is complete. He says: **"Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot"** (Psalm 16:4-5).

He was on His way to Gethsemane and Calvary, and He well knew the agonies awaiting Him there; yet He rested Himself upon His FATHER, and could therefore say: **"My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever"** (Psalm 73:26); **"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him"** (Lam. 3:24). His enemies pressed on every hand, and He was perfectly aware of it, but He could say: **"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup Runneth over"** (Psalm 23:5).

Now here Him: **"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage"** (Psalm 16:6). Was He now thinking of us as His heritage? We saw a moment ago that we are His heritage, His inheritance, and that His delight is in us. How wonderful it is that He could say, while treading in the way of sorrows: **"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places"**!

His pleasure and delight were in doing His Father's will. He said: **"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work"** (John 4:34); **"I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart"** (Psalm 40:8). The sweetest, yea, the most enjoyable thing in the world, is to know and do the **"good and acceptable and perfect will of God"** (Romans 12:1-2).

Here Him further: **"I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons"** (Psalm 16:7). Happy is he whose heart's instruction agrees with the counsel of GOD. All too often the eyes of our hearts are unenlightened: **"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened"** (Ephesians 1:18), and therefore our hearts may lie to us and contradict the counsel of GOD.

I once listened to a precious Christian friend telling me that he believed he was deserted by the HOLY SPIRIT, hopelessly lost and on the way to hell. I knew that this dear brother's heart was condemning him contrary to the Word of GOD, and I called his attention to the teaching of I John 3:20: **"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."** GOD graciously used this Scripture to rescue His child from the Slough of Despond into which he had fallen. Of course, it is far better to have our hearts agreeing with GOD, who, though He often chastises His children, will never condemn us, for **"if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatever we ask, we receive of him"** (I John 3:21-22).

In the Psalm under discussion, listen further to the meditations of our LORD as He goes on, His face set as a flint toward Jerusalem and Golgotha: **"I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved"** (Psalm 16:8).

It was a Scripture somewhat similar to this that Satan used in seeking to induce CHRIST to tempt the LORD His GOD. **"And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: (that is, from the pinnacle of the temple) for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone"** (Matt. 4:6). The quotation was from Scripture, but it was a misuse of Scripture, for it omitted the very important condition preceding the promise.

The Psalm in Psalm 16, it is because the Son could say He had set the LORD always before Him, and because the LORD was at His right hand, that He should not be moved. The lesson for us is plain; let us carefully heed it.

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope" (Psalm 16:9). In the quotation of this verse in Acts 2:26: **"Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope."** We find the word "tongue" instead of "glory." His tongue was His glory, for His words were always GOD's words. **"My teaching,"** said He, **"is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself"** (John 7:16-17). **"For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak . . . : whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"** (John 12:49-50). His tongue, therefore, was His glory, and His tongue could rejoice always. How different it is with us!

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:9-10).

Our LORD descended into Sheol, which is the Hebrew way of saying Hades - the place of departed spirits, the place that we find described for us by the LORD in Luke 16:19-31, where the word in verse 23 is also "hell." The saved are no longer in Hades, for at His ascension our LORD delivered them all and escorted them into the Father's presence, moving the Paradise section of Hades into **"the third Heaven"**: **"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"** (Luke 23:43) and **"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third Heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter"** (II Corinthians 12:2-4).

While our LORD's soul was in Hades, His body slept in Joseph's tomb, resting in hope, dwelling in safety, dwelling confidently, awaiting the moment when life should re-enter it and raise it in incorruptibility and glory. When that moment arrived, CHRIST did indeed rise from the dead and become the firstfruits of them that slept: **"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept"** (I Corinthians 15:20); and our own resurrection is assured because of His; because He lives, we shall live also. He said so!

"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe" (John 14:29).

"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11).

"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (I Thessalonians 4:14).

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).

There is an interesting alliteration suggested by five words of this Psalm all beginning with the same letter. There are:

- (1) "portion," in verse 5;
- (2) "pleasant," in verse 6;
- (3) "path,"
- (4) "presence,"
- (5) "pleasures," in verse 11.

These words outlined our LORD's life program, and they might well be adopted as our own

program.

The LORD was His portion; let the LORD be our portion.

Since the LORD was His portion, the lines fell unto Him in pleasant places; there is no place so pleasant as in the LORD's will.

If we be in the LORD's will, He will surely show us the path of life; we shall not be left wondering where to go or what to do.

And at the end of the road we shall find our place beside Him in glory, and both at His right hand and in His right hand we shall find there are pleasures that endure, even "**pleasures for evermore.**"

A chief lesson of the Psalm is the wonderful peace and joy of our LORD's heart as He set His face as a flint toward the cross and the grave. In the very shadow of Calvary He sang, "**The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.**" He was at once "**a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.**" and the happiest Man in the world. And to those who walk in fellowship with Him He proves that He is able to give joy in the midst of sorrow; He is able to satisfy the heart's longings in all conditions and circumstances.

~ end of chapter 3 ~

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